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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural Economics
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FARM POPULATION ESTIMATES, JANUARY 1949

The number of people living on farms in the United States increased slightly during 1948, according to estimates of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. This increase was due to the excess of births over deaths in the farm population, as the direction of net migration was away from farms. In January 1949 the farm population numbered 27,776,000, as compared with 27,440,000 in January 1948. During 1948, the rate of increase in the farm population was 1.2 percent, slightly under the 1.7 percent increase that occurred in the total population of the United States. At the beginning of this year the farm population made up 19 percent of the civilian population of the United States. This percentage has remained nearly the same in the last few years although it is significantly less than the prewar proportion of 23 percent in 1940.

Births to farm residents exceeded deaths of farm residents by nearly a half million in 1948. In both the farm and nonfarm populations, birth rates were high in 1948 and only slightly under those of the record year of 1947. The rise in the birth rate following the demobilization of millions of men from the armed forces after the end of World War II reached a peak in 1947, but the 1948 rates were still far above those of the 1930 decade. In contrast, death rates in the farm and nonfarm populations are significantly lower than in the prewar period.

As a result of the high birth rates and low death rates, the excess of births over deaths in the farm population was 25 percent higher in 1948 than the average for 1930-39, in spite of the fact that the farm population was 11 percent smaller. It would have required a net migration from farms of almost a half million to offset the gain through natural increase. Actually, the net loss through migration from farms in 1948 was only 140,000, so that the number of people living on farms increased by 336,000.

The relatively small net migration from farms conceals the fact that a great many more people were involved. Approximately 1.3 million persons moved away from farms and nearly 1.2 million moved to farms in 1948. Not all this movement consisted of permanent migration. It is possible that roughly half of it may have been seasonal migration to and from farms, although no exact statistics are available as to the number of seasonal migrants. Many farm-laborer and farm-operator families regularly spend some of the midwinter months in towns or cities and return to their farm residences in the spring. Also, data from the quarterly estimates of farm population issued jointly by the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics suggest that around 250,000 youths and single men, or at least men without their families, move to farms for the active part of the agricultural season in midsummer but do not remain on farms in midwinter.

Another type of migration takes place among farm people that does not affect the total size of the farm population. About 2 million farm people in 1948 moved from one farm to another. The great majority of these moves did not cross State lines.

The net change in farm population due to farm men entering the armed forces and men returning to farms when discharged from the armed forces was insignificant in 1948.

All major geographic divisions of the United States had slight gains in farm population during 1948 except New England and the West South Central States, which had slight losses. The Pacific States had the largest relative increase in farm population in the year -- a gain of nearly 4 percent. The Pacific and New England divisions are the only divisions which have more people living on farms in 1949 than they had in the prewar year of 1940. For the country as a whole, the net decrease in farm population from January 1940 to January 1949 was 8.2 percent. Actually, the farm population decreased from 1940 to 1945 by 16.8 percent, but approximately half the loss has been regained since the end of the war.

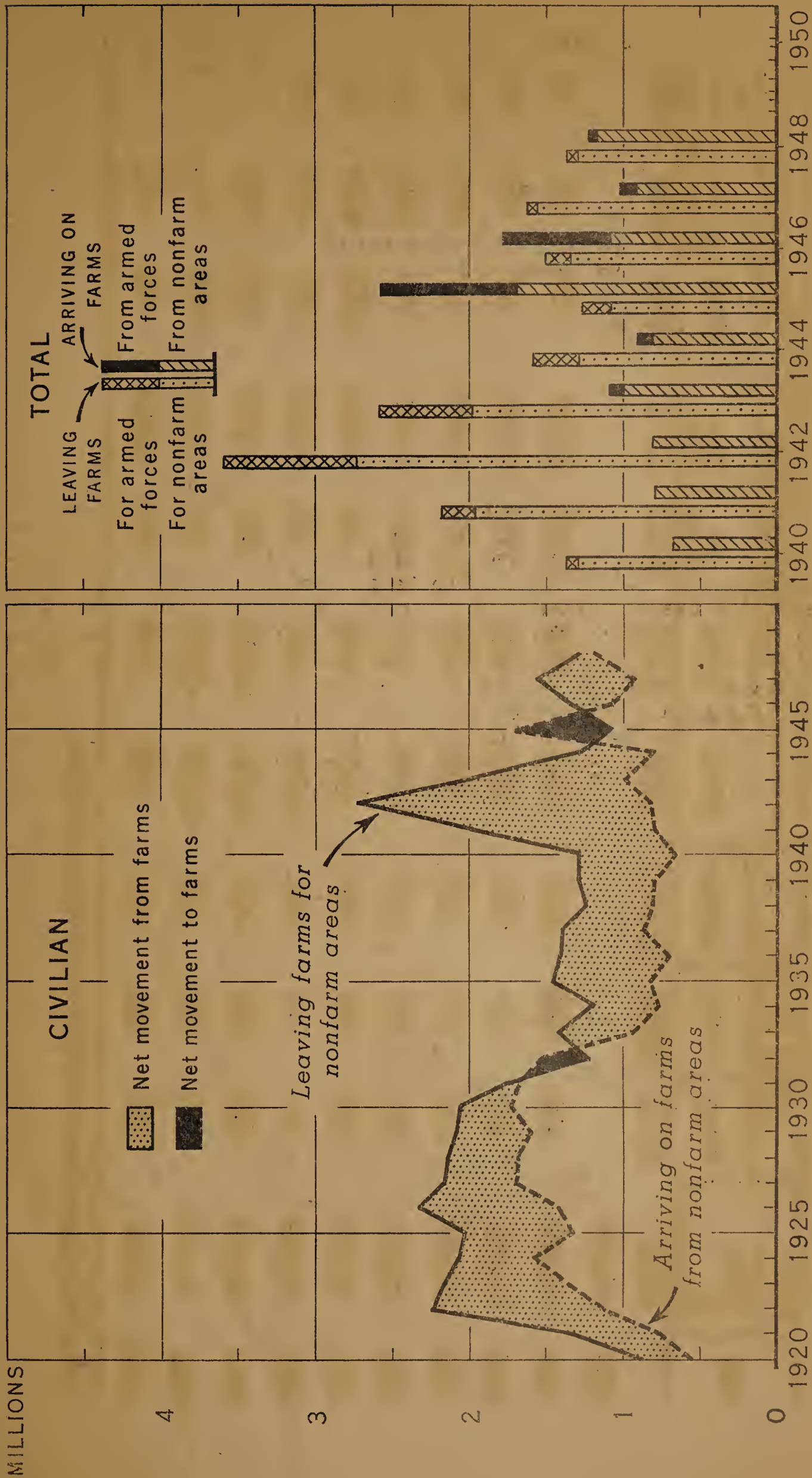
Note on Method of Deriving Estimates

Estimates contained in this report are based on bench-mark data from the Censuses of Population and Agriculture, current enumerative sample surveys, and mailed questionnaires returned by farmers. For January 1944 and later dates estimates are adjusted to the level of farm population of the United States, as estimated jointly by the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics on the basis of enumerative surveys and published in the Census-BAE series. For January 1945, the geographic distribution of the farm population is based on returns from the 1945 Census of Agriculture, adjusted to the total level of farm population shown in the Census-BAE series. A discussion of the comparability of the farm population data from the 1945 Census of Agriculture with the current estimates may be found in release No. 9 in the Census-BAE Series. Utilization of the 1945 Census bench-mark data was the basis for revision of the geographic-division estimates for the years 1941-45 which were issued in 1947.

For January 1947, the geographic distribution of the farm population is based on the BAE January 1947 Survey of Agriculture, adjusted to the total level of farm population shown in the Census-BAE series. All other estimates of the farm population of major geographic divisions except those for 1948 and 1949 are interpolations on the basis of mailed questionnaire returns between the 1940, 1945, and 1947 estimates. Estimates by major geographic divisions for 1948 and 1949 are based on questionnaire reports of changes that took place in the farm population during the year. The postcensal estimates are subject to revision after the next census is taken. All estimates of moves to and from farms and other kinds of changes in the farm population are based on mailed questionnaire returns adjusted to the population totals.

For years through 1947, estimates were made of the net change in farm population of major geographic divisions due to farm-to-farm migration that crossed division lines. Because farm-to-farm moves across division boundaries now constitute so small a proportion of the total movement from one farm to another, the net change has not been estimated for 1948.

MOVEMENT TO AND FROM FARMS, UNITED STATES, 1920-48*



* BIRTHS AND DEATHS NOT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

Table 1.-Annual estimates of the farm population, births and deaths occurring in the farm population, and number of persons moving to and from farms, United States, 1940-49

Year	Farm population on January 1	Change through migration									
		Change through natural increase					Civilian migration				
		Total		Deaths		Total	Total		To		Total
		Births	Deaths	Births	Deaths		From farms	To farms	From armed forces	To armed forces	
		1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
1949	27,776										
1948	27,440	479	732	-243	-143	-123	1,178	-1,301	-20	-79	59
1947	27,550	483	750	-267	-593	-640	914	-1,554	47	-69	116
1946	26,850	419	674	-255	281	-266	1,077	-1,343	547	-159	706
1945	25,190	354	604	-250	1,306	603	1,684	-1,081	703	-191	894
1944	25,521	345	591	-246	-676	-476	817	-1,293	-200	-300	100
1943	26,659	355	610	-255	-1,493	-988	994	-1,982	-505	-605	100
1942	29,048	390	660	-270	-2,779	-1,920	819	-2,739	-859	-859	-
1941	29,988	417	702	-285	-1,357	-1,146	814	-1,960	-211	-211	-
1940	30,269	400	696	-296	-681	-606	690	-1,296	-75	-75	-

See page 2 for note on method of deriving estimates.

Table 2.--World War II and postwar changes in the farm population, United States and major geographic divisions, 1940-49

Area	: January :		: January :		: Change 1940-45 :		: Change 1945-49 :		: Change 1940-49 :	
	: 1949 :		: 1945 :		: 1,000 :		: 1,000 :		: 1,000 :	
	1,000		1,000		Percent		Percent		Percent	
United States	27,776	25,190	30,269	-5,079	-16.8	2,586	10.3	-2,493	-8.2	
New England	756	604	617	-13	-2.1	152	25.2	139	22.5	
Middle Atlantic	1,673	1,543	1,772	-229	-12.9	130	8.4	-99	-5.6	
East North Central	4,128	3,886	4,589	-703	-15.3	242	6.2	-461	-10.0	
West North Central	4,254	4,016	4,676	-660	-14.1	238	5.9	-422	-9.0	
South Atlantic	5,821	5,011	6,025	-1,014	-16.8	810	16.2	-204	-3.4	
East South Central	4,768	4,250	5,238	-988	-18.9	518	12.2	-470	-9.0	
West South Central	4,058	3,723	5,008	-1,285	-25.7	335	9.0	-950	-19.0	
Mountain	1,008	1,016	1,102	-86	-7.8	-8	-8	-94	-8.5	
Pacific	1,310	1,141	1,242	-101	-8.1	169	14.8	68	5.5	

See page 2 for note on method of deriving estimates.

Table 3.-Annual estimates of the farm population, births and deaths occurring in the farm population, and number of persons moving to and from farms for geographic divisions, 1940-49

Area and year	Farm population: on January 1	Change through natural increase			Change through migration		
		Total	Births	Deaths	Total	To farms	From farms
	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
<u>New England</u>							
1949	756						
1948	761	7	16	-9	-12	41	-53
1947	753	* 6	15	* -9	1	47	-46
1946	709	8	15	-7	37	76	-39
1945	604	6	13	-7	100	140	-40
1944	603	4	12	-8	-1	28	-29
1943	607	7	13	-6	-9	59	-68
1942	614	4	11	-7	-9	57	-66
1941	616	5	12	-7	-6	32	-38
1940 3/	617	3	11	-8	-2	29	-31
<u>Middle Atlantic</u>							
1949	1,673						
1948	1,632	20	36	-16	21	89	-68
1947	1,623	26	43	-17	-18	65	-83
1946	1,599	19	37	-18	-5	90	-95
1945	1,543	12	31	-19	35	109	-74
1944	1,539	13	32	-19	-17	66	-83
1943	1,590	14	32	-18	-71	68	-139
1942	1,719	14	33	-19	-141	42	-183
1941	1,767	13	32	-19	-64	52	-116
1940 3/	1,772	12	32	-20	-30	50	-80
<u>East North Central</u>							
1949	4,128						
1948	4,056	57	99	-42	15	208	-193
1947	4,077	* 60	102	* -42	-83	148	-231
1946	4,020	48	93	-45	0	258	-258
1945	3,886	41	81	-40	70	274	-204
1944	3,844	40	80	-40	-23	181	-204
1943	4,026	29	75	-46	-233	148	-381
1942	4,431	35	83	-48	-467	117	-584
1941	4,569	41	85	-44	-207	123	-330
1940 3/	4,589	38	84	-46	-88	127	-215
<u>West North Central</u>							
1949	4,254						
1948	4,220	72	105	-33	-38	155	-193
1947	4,258	70	106	-36	-123	134	-257
1946	4,187	71	106	-35	-5	264	-269
1945	4,016	59	93	-34	97	313	-216
1944	4,087	60	95	-35	-145	128	-273
1943	4,234	61	94	-33	-222	152	-374
1942	4,532	60	99	-39	-369	110	-479
1941	4,641	59	95	-36	-195	118	-313
1940 3/	4,676	53	89	-36	-98	94	-192

(Continued)

Table 3.-Annual estimates of the farm population, births and deaths occurring in the farm population, and number of persons moving to and from farms for geographic divisions, 1940-49 (Continued)

Area and year	:	:	Change through			:	Change through	
	:	Farm	:	natural increase		:	migration	
	:population:	:	:	:	:	:	To	From
	: on	: Total	: Births	: Deaths	:	: Total	: farms	: farms
: January 1	:	:	:	:	:	1/ 2/	2/	1/
	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000		1,000	1,000	1,000
<u>South Atlantic</u>								
1949	5,821							
1948	5,714	109	164	-55	-2	236	-238	
1947	5,671	* 116	170	*-54	-61	160	-221	
1946	5,475	104	153	-49	128	321	-193	
1945	5,011	88	139	-51	427	631	-204	
1944	5,115	78	127	-49	-135	119	-254	
1943	5,334	79	129	-50	-237	142	-379	
1942	5,808	99	150	-51	-527	90	-617	
1941	5,984	108	168	-60	-253	114	-367	
1940 3/	6,025	102	166	-64	-132	100	-232	
<u>East South Central</u>								
1949	4,768							
1948	4,725	101	140	-39	-58	150	-208	
1947	4,777	86	139	-53	-127	139	-266	
1946	4,621	72	116	-44	94	297	-203	
1945	4,250	65	106	-41	335	487	-152	
1944	4,330	66	107	-41	-129	119	-248	
1943	4,553	74	117	-43	-292	121	-413	
1942	4,970	79	123	-44	-493	88	-581	
1941	5,173	91	143	-52	-284	89	-373	
1940 3/	5,238	91	143	-52	-138	83	-221	
<u>West South Central</u>								
1949	4,058							
1948	4,071	71	102	-31	-84	183	-267	
1947	4,128	80	115	-35	-150	180	-330	
1946	4,008	68	105	-37	44	308	-264	
1945	3,723	57	96	-39	215	454	-239	
1944	3,858	55	92	-37	-200	123	-323	
1943	4,158	69	107	-38	-379	177	-556	
1942	4,693	75	116	-41	-602	119	-721	
1941	4,911	75	120	-45	-265	132	-397	
1940 3/	5,008	78	124	-46	-145	108	-253	
<u>Mountain</u>								
1949	1,008							
1948	998	22	29	-7	-12	63	-75	
1947	1,011	* 21	29	* -8	-22	71	-93	
1946	1,012	17	26	-9	-27	57	-84	
1945	1,016	14	24	-10	-28	44	-72	
1944	1,022	15	24	-9	-26	71	-97	
1943	1,030	13	22	-9	-26	108	-134	
1942	1,077	14	24	-10	-73	100	-173	
1941	1,099	16	26	-10	-48	77	-125	
1940 3/	1,102	15	26	-11	-28	41	-69	

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Table 3.-Annual estimates of the farm population, births and deaths occurring in the farm population, and number of persons moving to and from farms for geographic divisions, 1940-49 (Continued)

Area and year	: Farm : population: : on : January 1 :	: Change through : natural increase			: Change through : migration		
		: Total	: Births	: Deaths	: Total	: To : farms	: From : farms
					1/ 2/	2/	1/
	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Pacific							
1949	1,310						
1948	1,263	20	31	-11	27	112	-85
1947	1,252	18	31	-13	-10	86	-96
1946	1,219	12	23	-11	15	112	-97
1945	1,141	12	21	-9	55	126	-71
1944	1,123	14	22	-8	0	82	-82
1943	1,127	9	21	-12	-24	119	-143
1942	1,204	10	21	-11	-98	96	-194
1941	1,228	9	21	-12	-35	77	-112
1940 3/	1,242	8	21	-13	-20	58	-78

1/ Includes persons who entered the armed forces.

2/ Includes persons who returned from the armed forces.

3/ Farm population January 1, adjusted on the basis of Census enumeration of April 1.

* Revised.

See page 2 for note on method of deriving estimates. Estimates of the farm population of major geographic divisions for January 1948 and earlier dates include an allowance for net change through interdivisional farm-to-farm movement in the preceding year.